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the *Théâtre Lyrique*, "the *scène*" (as it is stated) "on which M. Gounod gathered his first laurels by the production of his *Faust and Margherita*." After this preliminary flourish, the names of the artists engaged are given, accompanied with the lessee's opinion of their qualifications. It would be impossible for us in this brief sketch to re-produce these individual laudations; but one, upon Madame Maria Vilda (who fairly established herself in public estimation during the last season), will serve as a fair sample of the style in which they are written:—

The *début* of this lady last year, in the character of *Norma*, may be regarded as another remarkable epoch in the annals of the Royal Italian Opera. The beautiful quality and the complete freshness of the voice of Madame Vilda at once charmed her audience, while the perfection of her *école*, and the general grandeur of her performance of the arduous character in Bellini's masterpiece, caused her unmistakably to be recognized as destined to fill the void for some years left in the higher walks of the Grand *Répertoire*.

The prospectus of Her Majesty's Theatre commences with a history of the Establishment from the earliest times, in which the public is not only reminded of the operas there originally produced, but is requested to remember that, "upon the declaration of peace," it was there that "the allied Sovereigns received an enthusiastic ovation." Not having any new operas to produce, the lessee remarks that it is "unnecessary to possess the exclusive right of any particular work," an observation which we do not remember to have seen in any former prospectus. The operas to be given are then introduced, with the usual description of their claims to public attention. *Don Giovanni* is called the composer's "Capo d'Opera;" *Il Flauto Magico*, "the romantic *chef-d'œuvre* of Mozart;" *Guglielmo Tell*, "the acknowledged masterpiece of the most illustrious of Italian composers;" *La Donna del Lago*, "an eminently pure Italian opera;" and *Dinorah*, "one of the most perfect productions in the records of the lyric stage." Then follows the list of vocalists, with the usual remarks appended to each name. Respecting the personations of Madlle. Titiens—now, we should imagine, too well known and appreciated to need further eulogy—we are informed that "it is only once in a century that a vocalist can be found with that rare combination of lyric genius, dramatic fire, and magnificent voice, indispensable for the adequate impersonation of such characters." Then Madlle. Sinico is praised for her "versatility and cleverness;" and Madlle. Ilma de Murska is mentioned as "an accomplished and gifted artist." With the list of operas from which selections will be made during the season, this elaborate prospectus (which occupies two columns and a half of a daily newspaper) concludes.

But it is not only in the issuing of these brilliant annual addresses that the old-world notions linger in these lyrical establishments. Much is written and said of the spread of a taste for operatic music amongst the people; but let us see how the "people" are provided for in these still aristocratic temples of art. The poor music-lover knows and feels that he is admitted on sufferance. He is received at the door by soldiers with fixed bayonets, who look fiercely at him, but still graciously permit him to pass. He is still under the delusion that there is a "pit;" it is in the bills, but it is not in the house. "Fine by degrees, and beautifully less," it is limited to a few seats, which, by some unaccountable process, seem to be filled as soon as the doors are open. Suppose, however, that he has purchased a pit ticket; would it not be imagined that he had thus earned the right

to occupy one of the few seats which are set apart for the "people?" Delusive notion! he must stand at the doors for three quarters of an hour before they open, rush in with the crowd, and either tumble into a seat (perhaps without a back to it), or stand the whole evening a martyr to his love of art, and his misplaced confidence in the integrity of managerial announcements.

But the difficulties of getting in to this exclusive house, are completely matched (especially at the Royal Italian Opera) by the difficulties of getting out again; for unless your carriage "stops the way," and you are gently helped into it by a superb footman, it is ten to one if you do not, on emerging from the door of the theatre, get jammed helplessly against the wall, or run over by the equipages of your betters: no space is provided for humble pedestrians, or even for those who are seeking for public conveyances; and we have ourselves often seen ladies dashing through the lines of moving vehicles, at the risk of their lives, or creeping along by the side of the wall, with the constant fear of having their dress caught by the carriage wheels, or being themselves trodden upon by the horses.

We can scarcely believe that some remedy would not be devised for these grievances, were the attention of the lessees of these establishments drawn to the subject. The conversion of nearly the whole of the pit into stalls may give a very pleasing and fashionable air to the house, but it is a very rare thing to see them all filled, and assuredly a seven shilling seat in the pit that is occupied, is better than a guinea stall that is empty. At all events, on behalf of that portion of the musical public not blessed with a comfortable independence, we venture to hope that some of the subjects we have mentioned may be taken into consideration; and if prospectuses must be issued, we trust that next year they may contain the welcome announcement that some of the claims of the class for which we plead have been duly acknowledged and provided for.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

THE lessee of this house puts forth a very excellent list of vocalists who are engaged for the season. Madlle. Christine Nilsson is announced, as one of the most important of the first appearances; and as we are told that it has been said by connoisseurs that "the mantle of Jenny Lind" has fallen upon her, we look forward with much interest to her *début*. Most of the favourites of last season are re-engaged; and we are promised, amongst other welcome revivals, Spontini's Opera *La Vestale*, Rossini's *La Donna del Lago*, and Nicolai's *Faust*. The opening night occurs too late in the month for a notice in the present number.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

THIS establishment opened on the 2nd ult. with the well worn Opera, *Norma*. The cast was the same as last season, viz.—*Norma*, Madame Maria Vilda; *Adalgisa*, Madame Lemmens-Sherrington; *Pollio*, Signor Naudin; and *Oroveso*, Signor Attri. The first performance of Gounod's *Faust* this season introduced Madlle. Pauline Lucca in her favourite part of *Margherita*, Signor Mario in the character of *Faust* (in which he fully proved that he is, even now, unapproachable, if not in mere voice, at least in all the other requisites of an artist) and two new appearances—M. Petit, as *Mephistopheles*, and Signor Guadagnini, as *Valentine*. M. Petit is not only a fine singer, but a fine actor; and if he is a little inclined to overdo some portions of the character of *Mephistopheles*, the fault may be pardoned from the originality of his conception of the character. Signor Guadagnini made little effect in the part of *Valentine*; but he may yet have an opportunity of producing a more favourable impression in some other character. The revival of *Fra Diavolo* has enabled Signor Ciampi to achieve a decided success as *Lord Koburg*. Signor Naudin sang also exceedingly well in the part of *Fra Diavolo*; and the characters of *Lorenzo*, *Matteo*, *Giacomo*, and *Beppo* were ably supported by Signori Neri-Baraldi, Polonini, Capponi, and Tagliafico. Madlle. Morensi, too, made a very excellent *Lady Koburg*; and it is quite unnecessary to enlarge upon the exquisite singing and acting of Madlle. Pauline Lucca in the part of *Zerlina*. The *début* of Signor Cotogni in *L'Africaine* was sufficiently

favourable to warrant us in hoping that he may be allowed to present himself in a more truly legitimate character than *Nelusko*. He possesses a fine voice of baritone quality, and sings and acts with much vigour; but, as we have said, the part he selected for his first appearance is a thankless one, and we prefer to reserve our final opinion on his merits until we have had a further opportunity of testing his powers.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

Mr. Benedict's Cantata, *St. Cecilia*, of which we gave so favourable an account on its production at the Norwich Festival, was performed for the first time in London on the 29th March, and fully justified all that we have already said of its merits. We have had no work of the same character for very many years at all comparable to this semi-religious Cantata: some of the choral bits which are woven in with the dramatic music of the principal characters, are exceedingly beautiful; and the final air, with snatches of chorus, is a worthy climax to a work which we think destined to live beyond the fashion of the hour. The performance, as far as regards the principal vocalists—Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, Madame Sainton-Dolby, Mr. Cummings, and Mr. Weiss—was extremely good; but the chorus was often coarse and unsteady; and the band, even, showed signs of the want of due rehearsal. Mr. Benedict conducted, and received, as he deserved, a genuine and spontaneous burst of applause at the conclusion of the Cantata. Rossini's *Stabat Mater* was afterwards given, conducted by Mr. Costa. *St. Cecilia* was repeated on the 12th ult.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE Concert on the 4th ult. consisted exclusively of sacred music, the execution of which was on the whole exceedingly good. Mendelssohn's Hymn, "Hear my prayer," afforded Miss Louisa Pyne an excellent opportunity of proving how rapidly she is advancing in her power of interpreting sacred music. The soprano solo in this Hymn requires not only a good voice, but a devotional feeling not often found in those vocalists who have been so long connected with the operatic stage as Miss Pyne; and we are therefore glad to see that she is now devoting her attention to a class of music for which she is eminently fitted. A very clever and well written Hymn by Mr. Leslie, "Songs of praise," was received with the utmost favour; as was also an air from the same composer's *Immanuel*, beautifully sung by Miss Louisa Pyne. Mendelssohn's Psalm, "Judge me, O God," was given in the usually excellent style for which this choir has so long been celebrated; as were also several other well chosen compositions by the most eminent sacred writers. Mr. Cummings sang Handel's "Deeper and deeper still," and "Cujus Animam" from the *Stabat Mater*, in his best manner; and Mr. Patey was also highly effective in the air "David singing before Saul." The violin playing of Mr. Henry Holmes was extremely good; but the music (by Tartini) scarcely harmonized with the character of the evening's programme.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE new Season Programme, just issued, presents, as usual, a great variety of attractions. Foremost amongst these are nine Grand Opera Concerts, on Saturdays in May, June, and July, which will no doubt be of a varied and interesting character. Arrangements having been made with the lessees of the Royal Italian Opera, and Her Majesty's Theatre for the appearance, during the season, of the principal *artistes* of these establishments. Besides the Opera Concerts, it is also the intention of the Directors to undertake a great Benefit Concert, on a grand scale, in June, for which very numerous offers of assistance have been already received. These, with many other equally tempting non-musical attractions, will no doubt ensure a large issue of season tickets for the forthcoming season, which we may say commences with the date of our present number (May-day), on which occasion a Choral performance will take place in the great Handel Orchestra by 5,000 singers, in connection with the Metropolitan Schools, under the direction of Mr. G. W. Martin.

GENOA.

WE are happy to record that the experiment for introducing Classical instrumental music here has had complete success; in so far as regards the Concert for Orchestral Compositions given by Professor Bossola, and the series of Quartett Concerts given by Maestro Lavagnino. The concluding performance of the series afforded an opportunity for an original and graceful piece of homage to Signora Paulina Vaneri; who has contributed so largely to the brilliancy and artistic beauty of the vocal portion of these concerts. The ovation consisted in a succession of the loveliest children belonging to the ladies among the audience, coming forward after Vaneri's last aria, bearing baskets filled with flowers, which they presented to her each in turn; she kissing the little ones for their offerings, and bowing her thanks to the audience, surrounded by the fair young bevy, whose cheeks rivalled the blossoms they brought.

On the occasion of the last performance of Meyerbeer's *Africaine* for the season, at the Carlo Felice Opera-house, La Vaneri was enthusiastically greeted with bouquets and presents from her numerous admirers; and Signor Luigi Merly, the unrivalled baritone, performed his part of *Nelusko* with his usual superexcellence. The

London musical public ought to hear him; he is a consummate lyric artist.

This theatre, before closing, gave its long-promised production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; but owing to the cabals got up by a certain party that set their faces against classical music because of their own incapacity for appreciating it, the opera was performed amid a storm of hissings, hootings, and whistlings, that would have disgraced the gallery of a minor theatre. Persons in gentlemen's clothes and officers' uniforms, *pre-provided with cat-calls*, gave evidence that they had come determined to condemn the opera that has been pronounced a masterpiece by all the musical audiences of Europe; thereby preventing others from hearing and enjoying, while they proclaimed themselves each one to be that which Dogberry wished he had been "written down." They put down Mozart, indeed; but they whistled themselves down still more emphatically.

Mr. Harry Sanderson, who gave his first Concert at the Hanover Square Rooms on the 10th ult., scarcely appeals to the public as a rival to the established pianists of the day. He evidently regards the pianoforte as an orchestra, and from it endeavours to draw forth as much as possible the effect of a full score. In this attempt we are bound to say that he is highly successful. There is an individuality about his playing which we are not to see imitated; but certainly his performances of the Fantasia on *Rigoletto*, and the "Study in Octaves," were perfect marvels of execution. He was ably assisted by several vocalists and instrumentalists of eminence; but the special interest of the concert was unquestionably the concert-giver himself.

THE 129th Anniversary Festival of the Royal Society of Musicians took place at the Freemasons' Tavern on the 6th ult. Mr. Beresford Hope, M.P., in the chair. In introducing the principal toast of the evening, "Prosperity to the Royal Society of Musicians," the Chairman made a very able and eloquent speech, in which he warmly advocated the claims, not only of music, but of musicians, and impressed upon all the necessity of persevering in the earnest cultivation of the art, and in the "determination of making it respectable and respected." There were many other excellent speeches during the evening—(amongst others, one by Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, in return for the toast, "The Patrons and Friends of the Society," in which the name of Professor Sterndale Bennett was received with the utmost applause); and the only check to the enjoyment of the evening was the absence of Mr. G. F. Anderson, the respected honorary treasurer, who was prevented by a severe accident from being present. In his absence, Mr. Stanley Lucas, the secretary (who had a well-deserved compliment paid to him by the Chairman) read the list of donations and subscriptions, which amounted to about £300. Amongst these were £15 from the Chairman, £10 10s. from Messrs. Ashdown and Farry (4th donation), Messrs. L. Cock, Addison, and Co. (4th donation), Messrs. Novello and Co. (5th donation), Captain Ottley, and Miss Gotobed. There were also several smaller contributions, including donations of £5 5s. from Messrs. Hutchings and Romer, Herr Joachim, Jules Benedict, and Otto Goldschmidt. The musical arrangements were excellently carried out, the concerted music being under the direction of Mr. James Coward, and the solo vocalists being accompanied by Mr. C. E. Stephens. The following artists lent their valuable assistance:—Miss Susan Galton, Miss Julia Elton, Messrs. Barnby, Baxter, Fielding, Young, Carter, Coates, Donald King, Land, Mason, Fred. Walker, Whiffin, J. Coward, Distin, Kinke, Lawler, Wilkinson, and Winn; pianoforte, Madlle. Mehlig; flute, M. Olfé Svensen.

A CONCERT, in connection with the Barnsbury Literary Institute, was given at Myddelton Hall, by the Islington Vocal Union, on the 29th March, which was in every respect highly successful. Miss Baillie (a pupil of Madame Arabella Goddard) made a most favourable *début* as a pianist on the occasion, creating quite an effect (according to the account furnished us) in a Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin by Dussek (in which she was joined by Herr Jacoby), and also in two Fantasias by Benedict. The part-music was exceedingly well rendered, especially Pissuti's "The sea hath its pearls," and Bishop's "Tramp Chorus," which latter composition afforded Miss Langley (a *débutante*) an opportunity of displaying a very excellent soprano voice. The programme was well selected, and gave the utmost satisfaction to a large audience.

A CONCERT was given by the South Norwood Musical Society at St. Mark's School, on the 9th ult., which was extremely well attended. The first part was devoted to selections from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, and the second part was miscellaneous. Every piece was exceedingly well received, and several were encored. The concert was given in aid of the funds of the school; and we are glad to say that the debt was entirely cleared off by the proceeds of the performance. After the concert the Rev. C. M. Arnold thanked the members for the zeal they had shown, and complimented them very highly, together with their conductor, Mr. W. J. Westbrook. Mr. J. S. Bates and Mr. E. Bawtree presided at the pianoforte.

THE inauguration of the new Music Hall in Langham Place, called "St. George's Hall," which is licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to Dr. Henry Wylde, took place on the 24th ult., when a very large number of members of the musical profession and patrons of the art assembled. An address, written for the occasion by H. T. Braithwaite, Esq., A.M., was delivered by Mrs. Stirling, and received with much applause; and the evening